

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2946 without my signature.

The California Constitution provides the People the right to directly enact laws, approve amendments to the Constitution, to reject laws passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor, and to remove those elected from office. As envisioned by Hiram Johnson, this important democratic process gives the people direct control over their government and is one of our most important means to prevent out of control special interests.

This measure is a direct assault on the People's right to initiative, referendum and recall. By requiring signatures to be held invalid if a petition has any sort of defect, this bill would allow legal technicalities to thwart the will of hundreds of thousands of Californians who choose to sign initiative petitions. This runs counter to the long-standing judicial policy of applying a liberal construction to the people's power of the initiative.

The prohibitions on per-signature payments will make it more difficult for grass-roots organizations to get the necessary signatures in the time allotted. As I have said before making the process more difficult may be fine for those opposed to the initiative process or those who profit from it, but it is not for everyday Californians with an idea for reform.

For these reasons, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger